

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6 and 8-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4 and 20 are amended, and claims 7 and 21 are canceled. No new matter is added. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, in original claim 2 as well as in page 17, lines 1-24 of the specification.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants extend their appreciation to the Examiner for her indication that canceled claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 3-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Blackburn et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,352,747) in view of Beltz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,451,507). Claim 7 has been canceled, thereby obviating the rejection with respect to that claim. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection with respect to the remaining claims.

The asserted combination of references does not disclose or render obvious "wherein the rotational speed of the object to be coated is constant when the coating liquid is dripped in the ring shape, and the rotational speed of the object to be coated is constant when the coating liquid is dripped in the spiral shape," as recited in amended claim 1 and similar recited in

amended claims 4 and 20. In the Office Action, the Examiner correctly states that Blackburn fails to teach varying the spin speed of the substrate during the coating process. Moreover, Beltz fails to cure Blackburn's deficiency, for this reference only discloses decreasing a substrate's surface spin rate at a rate of $1/R$, where R is the radial position of the arm from the center of the substrate. On the other hand, amended claims 1, 4 and 20 recite that the rotational speed of the object remains constant when the liquid is dripped in the ring shape and when it is dripped in the spiral shape. Furthermore, the amendments to claims 1, 4 and 20 contain the limitations of canceled claim 21, which the Examiner has previously indicated were allowable. Thus, Beltz does not disclose or render obvious this feature as recited in amended claims 1, 4 and 20.

The rejection of dependant claims 3, 5-6 and 8-19 is premised upon the combination of Blackburn and Beltz disclosing or rendering obvious all the features of independent claims 1, 4 and 20. As discussed above, these references fail to do so. Accordingly, claims 3, 5-6 and 8-19 are patentable at least for their dependence from one of independent claims 1, 4 and 20.

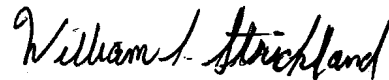
Accordingly, the applied references, either alone or in combination, do not disclose or render obvious all the features recited in claims 1, 3-6 and 8-20. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-6 and 8-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:WSS/hs

Date: December 1, 2011

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